Frequently Asked Questions- FCC Challenge

What is new in the FCC National Broadband Map, and what's included in the map?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released the first draft of its new, location-level broadband availability maps on 18 November 2022. These maps describe the service availability reported by providers as of 30 June 2022, at all broadband serviceable locations in the US and Territories.

This map includes:

• All locations in the United States and Territories where fixed broadband internet access service has been or could be installed.

• For each location, the maps include a list of providers that have reported that their internet service is available, the technology (fiber, cable, DSL, satellite, or fixed wireless) they offer, and the maximum advertised download and upload speeds available.

What is the FCC challenge process?

The FCC challenge process is the formal set of steps and requirements that the FCC has defined to enable consumers, local governments, and organizations to formally contest what is currently reported to be the internet availability in the FCC map.

The challenge process includes:
• Steps individuals or organizations can take to contest the presence or absence of a broadband serviceable location (BSL) or the service availability at a BSL
• A description of data needed for evidence to support a challenge
• Steps for the FCC and providers to review and respond to challenges
• The timeline for submission of challenges

Why is this important?

This is the first opportunity provided by the FCC to consumers, local governments, and organizations to formally contest what is currently reported to be the internet availability in the FCC map.

In addition, the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requires that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to allocate the $42.45 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding based on these maps.

To ensure that Illinois receives the appropriate funding to bridge the digital divide, **we must ensure the maps are as accurate as possible.**

What is the timeline for participation in the challenge process?

For the purposes of increasing the accuracy of the maps ahead of the BEAD allocation that NTIA will conduct, submissions by **January 13ᵗʰ, 2023** has been encourage.

What can you do to help?

Help spread the word, prioritize outreach in areas without broadband, areas with slow broadband (e.g., copper or satellite), and areas solely dependent on fixed wireless in your communities, and encourage residents to participate in the FCC's challenge processes.

Partner with local libraries, schools, and other organizations that can provide residents with the necessary resources and support they need to file their challenges.

What should you do right now? And what can you encourage your friends, family and members of your community to do?

1. Visit the FCC Broadband Map: **broadbandmap.fcc.gov**, and type your address.

2. Under technologies, select "All wired and fixed wireless"

3. If you encounter any of the following[1], follow this step-by-step guide to submit a location challenge.

    -   Your address location is missing from the map.
    -   Your address location is misidentified to take a commercial-grade internet service.
    -   Your address location has an incorrect building type or unit count associated with it.
    -   Your address is incorrectly placed on the map.

4. If you encounter any of the following[2], follow this step-by-step guide or review this video tutorial and submit a fixed availability challenge:

    -   Provider failed to schedule a service installation within 10 business days of a request.
    -   Provider did not install the service at the agreed-upon time.
    -   Provider requested more than the standard installation fee to connect the location.
    -   Provider denied the request for service.
    -   Provider does not offer the technology at the location.
    -   Provider does not offer the speed(s) shown on the National Broadband Map for purchase at the location.
    -   No wireless or satellite signal is available at the location.
    -   New, non-standard equipment is required to connect the location.

*__Note: if you do not feel comfortable submitting on your own__, submit information and evidence via survey on the Illinois Office of Broadband's website and we will submit the a bulk challenge on your behalf.

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[1] Source for list of potential issues for location challenge: FCC – how to submit a Location Challenge
[2] Source for list of potential issues for availability challenge: FCC – how to submit an Availability Challenge

How can I utilize speed testing data in the FCC Fixed Broadband Service Availability Challenge process?

Currently, speed testing data cannot be used in the FCC Fixed Broadband Service Availability challenge process. However, you can submit a complaint via the FCC's Customer Complaint Center for more information.

The FCC is also conducting a challenge process on Mobile Coverage, and welcomes individuals to download their speed testing app, to measure coverage, and submit a challenge.

The organization or local government I represent has collected a lot of information on service availability from members/constituents. Can I submit a bulk challenge on their behalf?

If you have an FRN (FCC Registration Number), you can submit a bulk challenge on behalf of your constituents or members.

If you do not have an FRN, we are happy to include the information you have collected in the bulk challenge that we will submit. Please either email broadband@illinois.gov with the data and evidence for bulk challenge; or, ask your constituents or members to submit information via survey on the Illinois Office of Broadband's FCC National Broadband Map Challenge webpage.

If you need help, who can you reach out to?

Illinois resources:
- Please reach out to broadband@illinois.gov with any questions, requests for assistance, or feedback. We are happy to help.
- We have also recently hosted a webinar on the challenge process, which can be found here.
- We will be hosting regular office hours to answer your potential questions, check the schedule here.
- Please also subscribe to the Illinois Broadband Connections Newsletter, here (if you haven't already) and keep a close look at the Illinois Office of Broadband website for our updates.

FCC resources:
- The FCC has a help center here, with guides, FAQs, and videos for consumers and organizations (bulk challengers)